

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 09496

E.O. 11652 XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, SP
SUBJECT: UCD LEADERS ON TRADE-UNION ELECTIONS

1. SUMMARY: AT LUNCH WITH ME NOVEMBER 29, UCD LEADERS SALVADOR SANCHEZ-TERAN (PARTY SECRETARY FOR ORGANIZATION AND SUAREZ ADVISOR) AND JOSE PEDRO PEREZ-LLORCA (NEWLY-ELECTED HEAD OF THE UCD PARLIAMENTARY GROUP), WHEN ASKED ABOUT CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION, PLACED GREAT EMPHASIS ON IMPORTANCE OF UPCOMING TRADE UNION PLANT ELECTIONS, WHICH SANCHEZ-TERAN CHARACTERIZED AS "SPAIN'S NUMBER ONE POLITICAL PROBLEM." HE SAID THAT THESE ELECTIONS WOULD SHAPE NOT ONLY UNION SECTOR, BUT NATIONAL POLITICS FOR SOME TIME TO COME AND THAT UCD HAD THEREFORE DECIDED TO ASSIST FORMATION OF NON-SOCIALIST, NON-COMMUNIST TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. SANCHEZ-TERAN CALLED UNDERSTANDABLE THE TENDENCY OF MANY TO HAVE CONSIDERED THE SOCIALIST UGT THE PRINCIPAL BULWARK IN THAT SECTOR AGAINST THE POSSIBLE ADVANCE OF THE PCE-LINKED WORKERS' COMMISSIONS. HOWEVER, HE CONTINUED, THERE WERE A GOOD MANY WORKERS WHO DISLIKED THE UGT'S MARXIST, CLASS COLORATION, AND THERE WERE A1 THE SAME TIME MEN OF PROVEN LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY, EXPERIENCED IN THE FRANCO-ERA VERTICAL UNIONS BUT NOT TARRED (AS OTHERS WERE) BY THAT BACKGROUND, WHO WERE
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ALREADY MOVING TO SET UP NEW UNIONS INDEPENDENT OF THE ESTABLISHED ONES.

3. THESE NEW UNIONS--HE MENTIONED FOUR IN PARTICULAR, THE CGT, CDT, CTI, AND CTC--APPEARED TO HAVE PROMISING POSSIBILITIES, AND IN ONE CASE HE KNEW OF DIRECTLY, HE ADDED, ONE OF THEM (CGT) WAS ALREADY THE SECOND-MOST-

IMPORTANT IN ONE PROVINCE. FOR THESE UNIONS TO HAVE MUCH OF A CHANCE IN THE PLANT ELECTIONS, HOWEVER, HE CONTINUED, THEY WOULD NEED FINANCIAL HELP (WHICH UCD COULD PROVIDE INDIRECTLY INITIALLY) AND THEY WOULD ALSO NEED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN ORGANIZATION.

4. FOR ITS PART, SANCHEZ-TERAN SAID, THE UCD HAD MADE A CONSCIOUS DECISION NOT TO TRY TO SET UP ITS OWN UNION. ON THE OTHER HAND, GIVEN THE PCE TIES OF THE WORKERS' COMMISSIONS AND THE CLOSE LINKS BETWEEN THE UGT AND THE SOCIALIST PSOE, THE MAJOR OPPOSITION PARTY, THE UCD DID FEEL MOVED TO RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF THESE NEW UNIONS (WHICH HE INDICATED COULD LATER ON FORM A SINGLE FEDERATION) IN THEIR EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH A NON-COMMUNIST, NON-SOCIALIST--IN SUM, A NON-MARXIST--UNION ALTERNATIVE.

5. UNLESS SUCH AN ALTERNATIVE LABOR FORCE CAME INTO EXISTENCE, SANCHEZ-TERAN SAID, HE COULD ENVISAGE A SITUATION SEVERAL YEARS HENCE WHEN THE GOVT WOULD HAVE NO OTHER MEANS OF DEALING WITH SPANISH LABOR UNREST THAN TO TURN POWER OVER TO A LEFTIST GOVERNMENT.

6. REGARDING TIMING OF THE ELECTIONS, BOTH SANCHEZ-TERAN AND PEREZ-LLORCA INDICATED THAT THE UCD/GOVERNMENT IS IN NO HURRY TO CONVOKE THEM AND STATED THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE HELD IN DECEMBER. REFERRING TO STILL-CONFIDENTIAL

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UNRESOLVED DIFFERENCES OVER WHETHER THE ELECTORAL LISTS SHOULD BE OPEN (I.E. INDIVIDUAL NAMES) OR CLOSED (I.E. TRADE UNION LISTS) AND WHETHER (AS APPEARS TO BE THE GROWING CONSENSUS) OPEN LISTS ARE USED IN SMALLER FIRMS WITH LESS THAN TWO HUNDRED EMPLOYEES AND CLOSED LISTS IN THE LARGER ONES, THE TWO INDICATED THAT THE GOVT'S INCLINATION WAS TO SEND A BILL TO THE CORTES AND LET THE MATTER BE THRASHED OUT THERE. SINCE IN ANOTHER CONTEXT THEY NOTED THAT LEGISLATION ORDINARILY TAKES SOME THREE MONTHS TO BE PASSED, IT SEEMED CLEAR THAT THE GOVT IS PREPARED TO SEE THE ELECTIONS PUT OFF APPRECIABLY LATER THAN THE ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED DATE OF MID-NOVEMBER. WHETHER PSOE, UGT AND, INDEED, MANAGEMENT GROUPS ANXIOUS TO SETTLE LABOR PROBLEMS IN VARIOUS FACTORIES, WILL ACCEPT MUCH MORE DELAY ON THIS MATTER REMAINS TO BE SEEN. STABLER

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